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Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

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Thursday, 30 August 2001, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Amin
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Kassé
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Ms. Achouri
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Hume

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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01-52423 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Belgium, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mukongo Ngay (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Andjaba (Namibia) and Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of members to the following documents: S/2001/759, letter dated 1 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/2001/774, letter dated 8 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/2001/815, letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium addressed to Secretary-General.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hédi Annabi.

As there is no list of speakers, I would invite those who wish to take the floor to indicate their wish to the Secretariat.

I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hédi Annabi.

Mr. Annabi: Since Mr. Kamel Morjane, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, last briefed the Security Council on the situation in that country on 24 July, the Secretary-General has appointed Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi to succeed Mr. Morjane as his Special Representative. Mr. Ngongi will be arriving in Kinshasa today. As members of the Council are aware, the Secretary-General will himself be visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda starting on 1 September. The Secretary-General will be accompanied by Mr. Guéhenno and other senior Secretariat officials.

The overall situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to be favourable in many respects. The ceasefire along the confrontation line has continued to hold, by and large, since January. The disengagement of forces from the confrontation line and their redeployment to new defensive positions is largely complete. Namibia continues to withdraw its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in accordance with the schedule announced by the Namibian Government. And Uganda has withdrawn significant numbers of troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue reached agreement on a time and a place for the actual beginning of the dialogue.

At the same time, there are still a number of areas of concern. Fighting — at least some fighting — continues in the East, primarily in the form of attacks by armed groups that are not signatories to the Lusaka Agreement on the forces of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) and the Rwandese armed forces (RPA). Serious human rights violations

continue, and the humanitarian conditions for many — in fact, millions — inhabitants of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain very poor. I will now go into more detail on some of these developments.

On the political side, the preparatory meeting for the inter-Congolese dialogue was held in Gaborone from 20 to 24 August. It was remarkably successful. The parties have agreed to conduct the dialogue in Addis Ababa, starting on 15 October, for an estimated period of some 45 days. Approximately 70 delegates from the Congolese signatory parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, as well as from civil society and every province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, took part in the preparatory meeting in Gaborone, which was conducted in a constructive atmosphere.

The Gaborone meeting also resulted in an agreement by the participants on key issues such as the liberalization of political life in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respect for human rights, release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, freedom of movement of people and goods throughout the country, re-establishment of communication links in the country and the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, restitution of seized property, protection of the population from arbitrary arrests, protection of natural resources from illegal exploitation, and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country in accordance with the Lusaka Agreement.

Another key development that emerged in the margins of the preparatory talks was the convening of a meeting between President Kabila and rebel leaders, Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba, of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), and Mr. Adolphe Onusumba (RCD). This meeting was facilitated by Sir Ketumile Masire and reportedly contributed in setting the positive tone for the Gaborone talks.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Foreign Minister She Okitundu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared that the war in the country had ended, a view which was echoed by many others, including Mr. Bemba, who pledged to pursue the political track. However, reports of harassment of some political opposition delegations on return to Kinshasa demonstrate that many challenges still remain as the date of the dialogue in Addis Ababa approaches.

Over the recent weeks, the two rebel movements have continued to undergo internal leadership and membership changes. The RCD has reportedly expelled 17 of its 51 founding members, while the two movements that together formed the Front du Liberation du Congo (FLC) — that is, the RCD-ML and the MLC — now appear to be drawing apart amid clashes between their respective forces in the Ituri district.

Relations between MONUC and the Congolese parties have generally continued to be satisfactory. The Mission continues in particular to enjoy good cooperation from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On the other hand, MONUC staff have been subjected to occasional harassment by the RCD in the East, which MONUC has taken up with the authorities concerned on a number of occasions.

Turning to military developments, the disengagement and redeployment of forces in accordance with the Harare plan of 6 December 2000 is complete in two of the four military sectors, with only a handful of sites awaiting verification in sector 1 and sector 4. In fact, a total of 88 of 96 agreed new deployment positions have been verified by MONUC. The delay in completing verification of the remaining sites in Equateur Province — sector 1 — relates to a request by MLC to maintain its civilian administration in order to protect the population from what it fears may be reprisals by Government forces. In sector 4, the RCD has indicated that it does not intend to occupy the remaining four new defensive positions, which is considered acceptable under the Harare subplan.

In the meantime, MONUC continues to insist on the need to demilitarize Kisangani, as demanded by the Security Council in its resolution 1304 (2000). Though the RCD appears willing to discuss the issue, no concrete progress has yet been achieved in this regard.

The parties have reported more than 100 alleged cease-fire violations, which MONUC has sought to investigate. In many cases, inquiries revealed that the allegations could not be substantiated. Moreover, many RCD complaints involve alleged attacks on their forces by armed groups that are not party to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. It should also be noted that the RCD has repeatedly declined to guarantee the security of the unarmed MONUC military observers expected to conduct the investigations, making it impossible, in a number of instances, for MONUC to dispatch such missions.

In the meantime, in agreement with the RCD, MONUC military observer teams were deployed in Uvira and Bukavu earlier this month and received a warm welcome from the population. A reconnaissance mission was also carried out at Beni on 20 August, and the deployment of a United Nations team in that location is taking place as we speak.

On 16 August, a MONUC helicopter came under small-arms fire as it flew from Uvira to Kalemie, sustaining 14 bullet holes. Fortunately — I would say almost miraculously — there were no casualties and the helicopter landed safely. Since the incident, MONUC has taken additional security measures. To date, the identity of the assailant or assailants is unknown, and MONUC has requested the RCD, the local authorities in the area, to investigate the matter. However, this is an area where the armed elements of the Front pour la défence de la démocratie (FDD) are known to operate in significant numbers.

The coordination centres at Ilebo, Basankusu, Boende and Manono are being established, and the deployment of guard units in those locations will start in early October. Council members will recall that this was approved under resolution 1355 (2001). The purpose of these centres is to improve MONUC's logistical support of its operations in the interior of the country, and in particular to enhance the medical evacuation capacity.

MONUC military observers also continue to verify the withdrawal of Namibian forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with the timetable announced by the Namibian Government, which had announced that their forces would be withdrawn before the end of August. The Ugandan armed forces, — the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) — have also been observed to withdraw from Equateur province. However, the Ugandan Government has announced its intention to retain a presence in Buta and Beni, in the Northeast and North of the country, pending a review of the security situation there.

Turning to human rights, serious violations of fundamental human rights persist throughout the country. On the Government side, opposition political parties still encounter severe restrictions when they seek to undertake political activities. The military court continues to try ordinary cases, despite the Government's declarations to the contrary. The trial has now opened in Likasi, Katanga province, of some 80 persons accused of involvement in the assassination of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, but human rights groups have complained that the accused have not had access to legal counsel.

In RCD-controlled territory, in north Kivu, the climate of insecurity has also worsened, amid movements by armed groups towards Rwanda. Arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial executions are also continuing in the area. During the course of this month, frequent clashes between RCD forces and armed groups in south Kivu have resulted in killings, looting and population displacement. In MLC-held territory in the north-west of the country, the human rights situation is also reportedly deteriorating.

In general, humanitarian agencies have access to fewer than half of the 2 million internally displaced people in the country because of the prevailing security conditions. Humanitarian assistance activities in Ituri district have been seriously hindered following the killing in April of six relief workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Access in south Kivu has deteriorated significantly in the last few months, and in areas where humanitarian agencies have gained access, such as northern Katanga, the population has been found to be in a very bad state, raising concerns over conditions in the areas currently beyond the reach of the humanitarian community.

Reports from Zongo, an MLC-controlled town in Equateur province bordering the Central African Republic, indicate that some 20,000 refugees have crossed into the Democratic Republic of the Congo following recent unrest in Bangui.

On the positive side, the first humanitarian convoy escorted by the MONUC "peace boat" left Kinshasa on 31 July for Mogalo, in Equateur province. The barges were carrying 650 tons of medical, educational and other relief supplies. The convoy is expected to return to Kinshasa on 1 September, with 1,000 tons of corn, to be distributed in the city. MONUC is also working with the parties to establish a quadripartite commission on the use of the river.

MONUC has launched some 35 quick-impact projects. So far, projects totalling some $458,000 have been initiated countrywide, with priority being given to the repair of hospitals and health centres, the provision of medical supplies, the restoration of electricity, water purification and the rehabilitation of schools.

During a visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo this month, Ms. Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, launched a second National Polio Immunization Day in the south-western part of the country. The campaign, which is also being conducted simultaneously in Angola, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo, is aimed at halting transmission of the polio virus. During the first round, in July, 9.7 million people — 84 per cent of the targeted population of children under five years of age — were immunized against polio for the first time.

Ms. Bellamy also met with President Kabila and rebel leaders, and they reaffirmed their commitment to discontinue the use of child soldiers and to facilitate the demobilization of children.

In conclusion, I should like to say that MONUC is continuing to plan and prepare for the third phase of its deployment. The Secretary-General intends to revert to the matter in his report to the Security Council in October and, in the light of the cooperation extended by the parties, to make further proposals, as appropriate, to enable the mission to initiate phase III operations.

As we indicated earlier, the tasks that will confront MONUC during its third phase will be very complex and difficult. The difficulties and dangers associated with the disarmament and demobilization of the armed groups, as well as initial indications of the approach that the Secretary-General intends to take in this regard, were outlined in his most recent two reports, including his report of 8 June (S/2001/572). When they signed the Lusaka Agreement, the parties committed themselves to the full withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration of armed groups, that are not party to the Agreement. However, since the parties have not so far provided the necessary information, the precise mechanisms by which armed groups should be disarmed are not yet clear. The full support of all parties will therefore be required to enable the Secretary-General to submit to the Security Council proposals that the Council can support.

In the final analysis, the success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process will depend on the willingness of the parties to reach agreement on a clear and practicable political framework. During his forthcoming trip, the Secretary-General will encourage the parties to move resolutely in that direction, as it is clear that there can be no military solution to the problem of the armed groups or, for that matter, to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Annabi, for his briefing and for his reference to, among others, Ms. Bellamy.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I believe that Mr. Annabi's briefing today was timely. As he reminded us, the Secretary-General will be visiting the region in a few days' time, and last week the Gaborone meeting on national dialogue — to which he referred — took place.

I should like to make a few brief comments. The representative of Belgium will be speaking later on behalf of the European Union, and I should like to associate myself with the statement that he will be making.

My comments relate to the Gaborone meeting and the inter-Congolese dialogue, as well as to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the question of Kisangani, the future deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), humanitarian issues and next steps for the Council.

With regard to the Gaborone meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, we should like first of all to note the significance of the fact that it took place. The meeting was successful. Agreement was reached on the next meeting, which, as Mr. Annabi said, is to be held in mid-October in Addis Ababa. We should like to pay tribute to President Masire and his team. The Congolese have shown a spirit of compromise and made efforts to work towards national reconciliation. They have all said that they want to put an end to the war, preserve their independence and national unity and, working together, restore democracy. I believe that the international community should draw the appropriate conclusions from the inter-Congolese process and should encourage them by resuming aid and cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I also believe that the international community should encourage them by resuming aid and cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The positive developments in the peace process should be accompanied by progress in the daily lives of the Congolese people, and they need international assistance. I would like to refer to an excellent article by Brian Atwood, the former Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development who recently visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It appeared in the *International Herald Tribune* of 25 August, and was entitled "Congo Is Making Progress and Deserves More Western Help". I think that, in fact, the international community should assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its economic and social recovery.

The Secretary-General will visit the region very soon. He will touch upon a number of the issues referred to by Mr. Annabi. He will undoubtedly speak about disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) and confidence-building measures among the parties. Mr. Annabi told us that the peace process has made progress, that the ceasefire has been more or less respected, that progress has been made in disengagement, and that it is now time to move beyond that by implementing the plan for the withdrawal of foreign forces, as was required by an overwhelming majority of the participants in the Gaborone meeting, who demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces.

As Mr. Annabi has said, we need to move forward without delay in the process of DDRRR of armed groups. A plan is now being drafted and finalized. For this plan to be successful, however, we need a political framework and agreement on this DDRRR plan among the main countries involved, beginning with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as Mr. Annabi said. An agreement will be possible only if trust is established between the leaders of those two countries. The Secretary-General was in contact with those two leaders on the occasion of the Lusaka summit and will see them again in Kinshasa and in Kigali. These leaders need to come together and work together in order to move the DDRRR process forward.

Once the parties have reached full agreement on the details of the political framework, the international community should provide financial and material support and assistance in kind to support the DDRRR programme. We then need to reflect on and provide support for phase III of the MONUC deployment, which Mr. Annabi also mentioned.

The second point Mr. Annabi raised related to the demilitarization of Kisangani. This is an important issue, and the Security Council has made it quite clear that Kisangani needs to be demilitarized, and this is up to the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma). Resolution 1304 (2000) was very clear on this point. Rwanda and Uganda accepted the terms of that resolution. The next step is to convince RCD-Goma to accept it and to obtain their cooperation, because they alone now have troops in Kisangani. Let me recall that this city has become somewhat symbolic in the peace process. We therefore need to demilitarize Kisangani. The present situation cannot be allowed to continue.

It is not a question of the RCD-Goma evacuating the city. The city needs to be demilitarized, which is a very different matter. That obligation does not affect the civilian presence of the RCD-Goma, which can continue to administer the city until the crisis is resolved. However, the RCD-Goma must withdraw its military forces from the city of Kisangani.

Another point was the importance of the parties continuing to cooperate with MONUC and the question of the future deployment of forces, which was also referred to by Mr. Annabi. Mr. Annabi spoke about cooperation of the parties with MONUC. The Security Council must not accept that United Nations personnel should be subjected to threats and to pressure. This is an important issue that the future deployment of MONUC clearly depends upon. Mr. Annabi has given us useful information, including on the four coordination centres and on the outlook for phase III. We will be calling for the future deployments and an increase in MONUC personnel, especially a gradual deployment in the eastern part of the country.

Mr. Annabi referred also to economic, humanitarian and human rights issues. He said that the economic and humanitarian situation is still disastrous despite the progress already achieved in difficult conditions by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The re-opening of the river, to which he referred, will be a breath of fresh air for the Congolese people, allowing for better provision of supplies to the cities. The parties must assist

MONUC in re-establishing river traffic, which is of vital importance for the Congolese people.

With respect to human rights issues, all parties need to continue and do more very strictly to respect human rights in all areas under their control. In liaison with the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Garreton, the Council plans to remain watchful on this issue. There cannot be any settlement or reconciliation if those who violate human rights go unpunished.

Another issue on which the Council has focused is the plundering of resources. In April, we received the report from the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the publication of that report, we noted growing awareness by the international community of this plundering, which is considered to be fuelling the conflict and to be one of the reasons for the grave serious human rights violations as a result of the plundering. The Security Council needs to implement appropriate measures to end the illegal exploitation of resources. We hope that the Panel of Experts document to be published this autumn will indicate that progress has been made in this area.

Let me speak briefly about the future timeframe. The Council will continue to follow the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo very closely. Next week we will meet with Sir Ketumile Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue. At a later stage, the Council intends again to invite to New York the members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, with whom the Council maintains an ongoing dialogue. I think members will recall that they were invited here last February and that during the Security Council mission to the region in May, the Council met all the members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement.

On the occasion of the special session of the General Assembly on children, we will have an opportunity for further contacts, since I understand that most of the countries of the region will be represented at the very highest level during the summit on children to be held from 19 to 21 September.

In the meantime, we wish complete success to the Secretary-General, who will be going to the region. We understand that his new Special Representative, Mr. Ngongi, will be accompanying him in his travels. We welcome Mr. Ngongi's appointment and arrival. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Morjane for his outstanding work, as I told him a few days ago, before the conclusion of his duties in Kinshasa.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): I thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for, as always, a very useful briefing. The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to a matter of utmost importance and one that the Council must watch closely. After the strides forward earlier this year in terms of the parties' disengagement and the deployment of phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the picture has remained mixed. We continue to believe that the two key challenges for achieving further progress are, first, to halt all support to the negative forces operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, secondly, to proceed with the inter-Congolese dialogue.

The outcome of the Council's recent approaches to President Kabila and President Kagame respectively indicates a certain lack of political will to advance from the current state of affairs. It also displays the absence of dialogue between the two heads of State. This is regrettable, as much needed progress, with respect in particular to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) of the armed factions in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, can really be achieved only through political commitment jointly by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda.

While President Kagame has thus far not met with representatives, President Kabila is denying all allegations that his Government is supporting negative forces operating in the East. This issue is of key importance. Needless to say, it makes little sense to talk about disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) if armament is taking place at the same time. We encourage the Secretary-General and Member States with diplomatic missions in the region to keep engaging the parties on this issue. It is vital to re-energize the dialogue between the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Let me mention in this regard that my Government is considering a possible voluntary financial contribution to DDRRR activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would, however, like further information — as indicated above — before taking a final decision.

There have been mixed reports from the preparatory meeting for the inter-Congolese dialogue held in Gaborone last week. It is a positive sign in itself that such a first preparatory meeting has now been convened. From what we understand, the parties at the meeting were also close to reaching an agreement to free all political prisoners and prisoners of war and to return seized property and goods. Hopefully, the upcoming meeting in Addis Ababa will pave the way towards full commencement of the dialogue. We encourage the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and his team to continue their efforts to facilitate an urgent startup of the more substantive aspects of the dialogue.

Norway is deeply concerned about the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let me just mention that we are concerned in particular about the situation of the many vulnerable children.

Furthermore, and finally, Norway was very concerned to learn that a United Nations helicopter was fired at by unidentified gunmen in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the second time a United Nations helicopter has been shot at since the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). A future update on the progress of the United Nations investigation into this matter, following what we heard the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Annabi, say here today, would be very interesting. Violent actions against MONUC cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

Mr. Kassé (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me too to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public briefing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the holding of the Gaborone meeting. I would also like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his statement.

We have always said that the restoration of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend on the success of the inter-Congolese dialogue. Today, my delegation welcomes the holding and very encouraging results of the Gaborone meeting, which set the time and place for the long-awaited inter-Congolese dialogue, which is so essential to the Lusaka process. We echo those who have said that the Gaborone meeting has breathed new life into the Lusaka peace agreements.

We also note with satisfaction that, in addition to setting the date, venue and rules of procedure for the inter-Congolese dialogue, the Gaborone meeting also made it possible to make major decisions on other problems impeding a political solution to the very complex conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation would like to congratulate the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, who succeeded in organizing a meeting that had increasingly seemed impossible. We would like to convey our congratulations also to all the participants in the Gaborone meeting.

The success of the Gaborone meeting should not make us forget that we have a long way to go before the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be called irreversible. It is for that reason that my delegation has constantly called for the launching of the third phase of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which should not be held up by the Council.

With regard to questions relating to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of armed groups, we agree with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, that the staunch resolve of the Council will be crucial. We have great hopes that progress will be made on this issue during his upcoming visit to the region.

It is imperative that we demonstrate today the credibility and commitment of the Council to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, just as the parties must comply with the Council's demands. We also believe that the Council should continue to encourage the continuation of a dialogue of trust between the leaders of the region, so as to find a final and acceptable solution to the issue of armed groups.

In conclusion, my delegation appeals to the parties to show restraint and to demonstrate a spirit of compromise, responsibility and good faith so that the Addis Ababa meeting to be held on 15 October is a real success that leads to the implementation of the remainder of the Lusaka Agreement.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): We also thank Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive briefing this morning.

Today's meeting is taking place at a very crucial stage in the peace process. This is an opportunity for us and for other participating States to assess the situation together and to look for ways and means to support and accelerate the return to normalcy, peace and reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to assure him of our full support in the challenging task that awaits him.

We note the positive outcome of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, which took place from 20 to 24 August at Gaborone. We welcome the decision of those attending the preparatory meeting to reconvene in Addis Ababa in October 2001. A first important step in the right direction has been made by bringing together for the first time since the war broke out, three years ago, the representatives of the Government, the rebel movement, opposition parties and civil society groups. We welcome the free and reconciliatory approach adopted by all the parties signatories to the Lusaka Agreement. This is a clear demonstration of the desire for peace and reconciliation by the Congolese people in general. We commend them for that and encourage them to pursue their efforts.

My delegation expresses its gratitude to Sir Ketumile Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, for his relentless efforts in organizing the preparatory meeting. It is now vital that the Council encourage the facilitator and the Congolese people to maintain the present momentum for the next stage of the dialogue itself. Mauritius has all along emphasized the need to ensure an open, representative and all-inclusive process for the dialogue, which should include civil society and Congolese women. We hope that representativity and all-inclusiveness will be maintained.

As preparation for the inter-Congolese dialogue continues, we should not lose sight of other important aspects of the peace process. My delegation considers that the Council will have to address the following issues as a matter of priority.

First, the parties to the Lusaka Agreement should now be urged actively and urgently to finalize their comprehensive plans for the withdrawal of foreign forces and for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) of armed groups.

Secondly, the DDRRR process should proceed without any further delay. The Council must also start giving due consideration to the issue of the economic recovery of the country to accompany the DDRRR process. While we recognize that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been sensitized to play an important role in the country's economic recovery, it would perhaps be a positive stride forward if a pledging conference of bilateral and multilateral donors could be held in the near future.

Thirdly, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) will require additional manpower in the important task that it will be called upon to undertake during the third phase. My delegation believes that the next phase should be addressed with all the seriousness it deserves, particularly the issue of MONUC's strength, which we once again emphasize should be compatible with the task it faces.

The complete cessation of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an objective that the Council should pursue vigorously. We understand that the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently in the region. We call upon all the parties concerned to extend their full cooperation to the Panel. We wish to stress that the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo belong to the people of that country alone. We condemn all illegal exploitation, especially by foreign elements. It is in this spirit that my delegation looks forward to the report of the Panel of Experts.

Notwithstanding the progress made in the peace process, we have still not reached an irreversible situation. We urge all the parties to the Lusaka Agreement to commit themselves fully to implementing the agreement and to refrain from any act that might derail the process. My delegation is

particularly concerned about the recent events and reports that have been brought to our attention, namely, the gunshots at the helicopter used by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) earlier this month, fortunately without any casualties. We condemn this act, and we appeal to all the parties, signatory and non-signatory of the Lusaka Agreement, to cooperate fully with MONUC.

The status-quo situation in Kisangani needs to be condemned in no uncertain terms. The Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma) cannot continue defying the relevant Security Council resolutions on the demilitarization of Kisangani. The international community must continue to exert all possible pressure on the RCD-Goma to comply with the Security Council resolutions.

The activities of the armed groups in the east of the country are also matters of serious concern. All support to these armed groups must immediately cease.

There are reports that the Front pour la liberation du Congo (FLC) of Mr. Bemba is not withdrawing from Equateur province as envisaged. We appeal to them to honour their earlier commitment and to withdraw their forces as early as possible.

The dialogue among the leaders of the region, in particular those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, seems to have slowed down, if not disappeared. We feel that it is important that leaders of the region communicate with each other as a measure of confidence building. The international community should encourage the leaders to engage in dialogue as often as possible. In this respect, my delegation proposes that the Secretary-General, who will be visiting the region shortly, facilitate more frequent meetings among the leaders.

Finally, my delegation reiterates its appeal for the respect for human rights and humanitarian law all over the Congolese territory. We also call upon the humanitarian agencies to come to the help of those who are needy in the country.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you for convening this informational meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This meeting is a logical follow-up to our last comprehensive review in July and serves to measure what progress has been achieved since then on all aspects of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, we thank Mr. Annabi for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in the peace process, which covered all aspects of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Jamaica welcomes the positive developments in the inter-Congolese dialogue and the plans to convene the first round of talks in October in Addis Ababa. Now that a date and a venue have been set for the dialogue, we encourage all parties to cooperate fully with the facilitator so that the political future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be determined. We are well aware that a national dialogue, especially within the context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is by no means an easy undertaking. In that regard, the spirit of compromise and unity must pervade discussions if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

We welcome agreement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to begin the dialogue for national reconciliation before the withdrawal of armed groups. We are particularly pleased that President Kabila, Mr. Bemba and the leaders of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) met on the margins of the Gaborone meeting. Their subsequent statements are indeed encouraging.

While we recognize the need for reconciliation at the level of signatories and parties to the conflict, it must be recognized that civil society, particularly women, must have a key role in the dialogue. We look forward to hearing Sir Ketumile Masire when he meets with the Security Council later. I would like to hear from Mr. Annabi whether there was a positive response to the call for an increase in the number of women delegates to the preparatory meeting.

The reports of the imminent demobilization and disengagement of armed groups are also noted. The Jamaica delegation encourages all armed groups in this regard to cooperate with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in preparing and implementing plans for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) and to cease all forms of cooperation with the negative forces. The DDRRR of the armed groups remain critical to a lasting peace process in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. We take note of the recent plans of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take the first steps, and we urge the cooperation of all the groups.

My delegation congratulates Namibia for keeping its commitment to withdraw all its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the end of August. We commend Uganda for its continued withdrawal.

We remain concerned, however, about the distressing reports of recruitment of child soldiers and demand that armed groups desist from such practices. The humanitarian situation, especially in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, remains worrying. The statistics indicate that the internally displaced persons are increasing in large numbers and that the humanitarian response to the humanitarian need is woefully inadequate. While it is commendable that some improvement has been made, the fact remains that more needs to be done in this area. We call upon the armed groups to cooperate fully with humanitarian workers to allow access to populations in need.

Also of great concern to my delegation are the continued reports of gross human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law throughout many parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including areas under the control of the Government. As the reports indicate, perpetrators of these abuses show scant regard for the civilian population and even prevent the delivery of aid to relieve the suffering of the people. This situation is deplorable and cannot be tolerated.

As Mr. Annabi pointed out, military trials continue, and the rights of the accused are not being protected. I must remind all concerned that there can be no peace without justice.

We share in the concerns expressed by others before us of the lack of progress in the demilitarization of Kisangani, and again we appeal to the RCD to cooperate with MONUC. There are signs that the RCD is beginning to cooperate, but there is a long way to go to reach a level of satisfaction. We also call on the RCD to investigate expeditiously the shooting of the MONUC helicopter and to guarantee the safety of MONUC personnel in areas under RCD control.

Finally, my delegation underscores that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot be resolved without taking into consideration the regional context. In light of this, we again call for the convening of a conference of the Great Lakes region, which we believe is imperative to lasting peace in the area. It is our hope that the spirit of unity, which is beginning to manifest itself in the inter-Congolese dialogue, will be translated at the regional level, thus insuring peace and sustainable development throughout the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We echo the words of gratitude addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his important and very informative briefing. The Russian Federation, on the whole, is pleased at the progress made in the peace settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However fragile progress is there, the situation today in that country is a striking change for the better compared to the picture that we observed but a few months ago.

We take note of the process — which, under the control of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), is now virtually complete — of the disengagement of forces. Some foreign forces have already left the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the stated intention of the Namibian leadership to complete the withdrawal of their contingent from the Democratic Republic of the Congo by 30 August, and the intensifying dialogue between the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those of neighbouring States on the question of ensuring mutual security. Russia supports that process and wishes it every success.

We view the Gaborone preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue as a momentous event; participants decided on an agenda and a date for the beginning of substantive work. Russia commends the efforts of all parties involved in the preparations for that event, notably the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, President Masire. Also, we welcome the beginning of direct negotiations between the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the leaders of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) and the Front de libération du Congo, and the statements they have made, which attest to their intention decisively and irreversibly to abandon the path of war and to embark on that of

dialogue and national reconciliation. We expect that those statements will very soon be translated into concrete action advancing the peace process. For its part, Russia intends to do everything it can to ensure that they have the constant support of the international community.

We believe that among the priority elements is compliance by the RCD leadership with the demand for the demilitarization of Kisangani, as set out in Security Council resolutions 1304 (2000) and 1355 (2001). That is not an end in itself; it is dictated by the broader goal of implementing an overall concept for United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that, with that in mind, the RCD leadership will radically improve its interaction with MONUC.

It is obvious to us that, as the inter-Congolese dialogue and the regional dialogue move forward on the political aspects of settling the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a task of increasingly high priority will be the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of members of foreign armed groups enumerated in an annex to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

We reaffirm our position that this process must be voluntary and must have the support of all parties involved in the conflict. We feel that those conditions are a sine qua non for practical United Nations involvement in measures to support the process. We feel that it makes sense from the conceptual point of view to attach high priority to confidence-building in the eastern provinces, where the activities of those armed groups are on the rise. My delegation is prepared to give careful study to appropriate recommendations by the Secretariat on this matter.

In the longer term, we see the prospects for a settlement of this problem in the general context of the democratization of political life and the normalization of inter-ethnic relations in all countries of the Great Lakes region.

We are concerned at the extremely depressing information about the humanitarian and human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call on all sides to take the steps necessary to redress the situation, and to cooperate with international humanitarian personnel in ensuring access to those who need assistance.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I wish first to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging today's public briefing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like, as others have done, to thank Mr. Annabi for his comprehensive and helpful briefing today, and through him also to thank the Secretariat staff and the personnel of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for their work in promoting peace and reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also join others, on behalf of my delegation, in wishing the Secretary-General every success in his upcoming visit to the region.

Today's briefing, while, as Mr. Annabi said, encouraging in some important respects, also evokes a sense of frustration at the slow pace of progress in some other areas. When the Council mission returned from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the end of May, we were reasonably optimistic about the prospects for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the last open debate on this issue, held on 24 July, we expressed concern at the slow pace of progress and recalled that the future security and prosperity of the region lay in the signatories to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement meeting their obligations.

Today, three months after the Security Council mission and one month after our last debate on this item, there is now clearly a need, building on the real progress about which we have heard this morning, to give further momentum to the process.

I would like briefly to single out for emphasis a few points of concern to my delegation. We regret the absence to date of the political framework necessary for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of armed groups. In the absence of political will on the part of the signatories themselves, there is only so much that the United Nations or the wider international community can do. We strongly encourage the authorities in Kinshasa and Kigali to work together to take this process forward.

My delegation welcomes the announcement that President Kabila has invited MONUC to inspect the camps where several thousand fighters are reported to be cantoned, and we strongly encourage him to give MONUC access as soon as possible.

It is also time that the parties put forward plans for the orderly withdrawal of all foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is further essential, as has been emphasized this morning, that the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma) comply with the Security Council's demand for the demilitarization of Kisangani. There must be an end to support, from whatever source, for the activities of armed groups.

The misery and suffering of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are deeply shocking and disturbing. We urge the international community to respond generously to their plight. Ireland is also deeply concerned at violations of human rights, and it calls on all parties fully to respect human rights, to uphold the provisions of international humanitarian law and to ensure safe access to populations in need. The exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is a result of the conflict and which contributes to the misery of the population, must cease immediately.

My delegation welcomes the success of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue and warmly commends the efforts of the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and the positive spirit in which all delegations approached the meeting. The success of the dialogue is essential to the long-term peace and stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well to that of the wider region. We look forward to the substantive session of the dialogue starting on 15 October, and to the establishment of viable democratic government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing. The Chinese delegation is pleased that, thanks to the energetic efforts of the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue was successfully held at Gaborone from 20 to 24 August and that it yielded positive results. That was a most important meeting.

The final communiqué of the meeting showed that broad agreement had been reached on the timing and venue of the inter-Congolese dialogue, as well as on the scope of the items for discussion. That has laid the foundations for the peace process and it will have a positive impact on the situation in the Great Lakes region. We believe that this success is the result of the common efforts of representatives of all the parties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend all the Congolese parties for their willingness to act in the interests of the people and put aside their differences in order to seek common ground. We must, however, recognize that this is only the beginning. The task that remains is onerous. It is a challenge not only for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo but for the countries of the Great Lakes region and the international community as a whole.

The Chinese delegation believes that all the parties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must continue to consider the overall interests of their nation. The country must continue to make common efforts to seek the path of national reconciliation, which is in the fundamental interests of the people, so that its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity can be safeguarded and peace and development can be enjoyed as soon as possible.

We believe that the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) must comply with all the resolutions of the Security Council and quicken the pace of the demilitarization of Kisangani. We also demand the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the cessation of all assistance to armed groups and an end to the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo so that it can contribute to the peace, stability and development of the whole of the Great Lakes region. The Security Council must continue to make efforts in this regard.

We hope that the international community will fulfil its commitments by providing the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the economic assistance that it urgently needs. This will be important for the peace and stability of that country, as well as for the peace process itself. The timely and orderly deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is one guarantee of continued progress in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The second phase of the deployment of MONUC must be completed as soon as possible. In this regard, we demand that all parties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo fully cooperate with MONUC and create conditions necessary for its orderly deployment and the carrying out of its mandate. We hope that the Secretary-General will submit recommendations with regard to the deployment of the third phase of MONUC as soon as possible. At the same time, we suggest that

the Council begin considering the question of the third phase deployment.

Finally, the Chinese delegation highly commends Sir Ketumile Masire for the enormous efforts that he has made in the interests of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Amin (Bangladesh): My delegation appreciated the briefing given by the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, which provided the background for our deliberations this morning.

Significant developments have taken place since the most recent meeting of the Council on this subject, in which Ambassador Morjane participated, took place on 24 July. The most important and positive note has come from Gaborone. My delegation pays tribute to Sir Ketumile Masire for the successful holding of the preparatory conference for the inter-Congolese dialogue for national reconciliation. He has secured substantive agreement on issues relating to the dialogue; such progress also strengthens the peace process in general.

We have noted the optimism expressed by Foreign Minister Leonard She Okitundu; we, too, would like to see an effective and final end to the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have also noted the statement of the leader of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD), Ruberwa, that the guns have fallen silent and that none of the parties will take up arms again. Word of this spirit must be heard throughout the Congo and the Great Lakes region. This optimism, which might seem exuberant at this point in time, must be made a reality.

We have, of course, also taken note of the demands of the rebel movements with regard to the disarming of the so-called negative forces. This is also a demand of the Security Council. It is also an important provision of the Lusaka Agreement. This requirement must be met without any further delay. The Lusaka Agreement and Council resolutions do not provide for any quid pro quo. There is a sequence, however. During our last meeting, Bangladesh joined other members of the Council in reminding the RCD of its obligation to withdraw from Kisangani and its environs in compliance with resolution 1304 (2000). We also called for similar cooperation by the Front de libération du Congo and the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (FLC/MLC). We join Council members in reiterating these demands once again today.

We are pleased to note that the preparatory conference agreed to start the inter-Congolese dialogue on 15 October in Addis Ababa. It is essential that the momentum created in Gaborone is carried forward to the meeting in Addis Ababa. The intervening period of about one and a half months should be fully utilized by the Congolese parties. It will also be the collective responsibility of the international community to extend all possible assistance and support for the dialogue.

At our most recent meeting on this subject, we stressed that the dialogue must be open, representative, inclusive and free from any outside interference. Bangladesh also underlined the need to allow for the full participation of Congolese civil society. In this regard, I would like to recall the message sent to this Council by Sir Ketumile Masire on the question of the representation of women in the inter-Congolese dialogue. The Council responded positively to his letter, conveying to him the fact that we shared his concerns and his views on the question. We urge the Government and other Congolese parties to give specific attention to this issue as they prepare for the dialogue.

We have always stressed that the dialogue should be owned by the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, it is encouraging to note — we learned about this from the press — the allocation of $1 million to the fund for the dialogue by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as pledges by armed opposition parties. This is a positive gesture, which deserves to be complemented; the international community should continue to provide support.

We look forward, of course, to a more in-depth briefing from Sir Ketumile Masire himself when the Council holds a meeting with him next week, possibly on 5 September. It is encouraging to note that all the parties to the conflict that gathered in Gaborone called for an immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their call for the release of political prisoners should receive the priority attention of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Another positive signal from the region comes from the cooperation extended to the Panel of Experts on the illegal exploitation of natural resources. We

appreciate the constructive attitude being shown to the Panel by the leadership in the region.

Turning into the United Nations mission, we have noted the progress in the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), as reported to us by the Assistant Secretary-General. As we said earlier, the size of MONUC does not correspond to the demands of the situation. In his seventh report, the Secretary-General said that at that stage he was not asking for the enlargement of MONUC beyond the authorized strength. During the new stage — which we hope will soon be set up as the parties make progress in disengagement and withdrawal — we shall have to consider the expansion of MONUC. We are in full agreement with France on this question.

The success of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue paves the way for progress in these areas. It is time the United Nations prepared for what it will be required to do in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have consistently argued that the Council must make a clear commitment to consider expanding the size of MONUC, so that the mission can carry out the tasks assigned to it, as well as the additional tasks it should assume. There is a practical need for the Council to demonstrate a credible presence, determination and commitment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must not allow any pretext for delaying the withdrawal or return of foreign forces, thus unravelling the peace process.

Finally, the visit of Ms. Carol Bellamy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a timely and appropriate initiative. Her visit brought an area of pressing humanitarian concern into the limelight. The children of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are among the most severely affected by the protracted conflict. When we speak of the Congo, we speak of 16 million war-affected individuals, the most suffering among them being the children. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is also the country in which 2.5 million people were killed in approximately three years of war, according to an estimate presented by the International Rescue Committee. The Secretary-General wrote in his eighth report that "among the most disturbing findings is the disproportionate effect of the war on young children" (*S/2001, 572, para. 61*).

In two of the districts surveyed, Moba and Kalemie, the Secretary-General reported, an estimated 75 per cent of children born during the conflict died or were expected to die before their second birthday. For the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the current situation and in post-conflict Congo will be a major undertaking. We hope the organization is mobilizing its resources for that challenging task.

While the United Nations remains committed to supporting the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, it is incumbent on the Congolese parties, including the armed groups, whether signatories of Lusaka or not, to show respect for the United Nations and its personnel. We condemn in the strongest terms the attacks on a MONUC helicopter near Uvira, and ask for an urgent inquest. We demand an end to the harassment of MONUC personnel. The RCD leadership must stop such acts and ensure cooperation with the United Nations Mission.

Finally, as always we attach great importance to the role of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has all our support for his coming visit to the region. We are confident that his visit will give impetus to advancing the peace process and to preparing for the possible high-level meeting in early October, as we deliberate on the next phase of MONUC.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): We too would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Annabi, for his useful update on the situation. We congratulate the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and his team on the success of the preparative meeting and express the hope that all parties will continue their constructive approach when the inter-Congolese dialogue begins in Addis Ababa in October. Addis Ababa, as a venue, of course, has its own significance because it is the site of the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity and of its successor body, the African Union. We would like to reiterate the importance of an open, representative and inclusive dialogue by the parties in such an important setting.

The withdrawal of troops by Uganda and Namibia is a step forward. Every step forward fosters confidence and generates its own momentum for the peace process as a whole. However, we note from Mr. Annabi's briefing that military disengagement has not been proceeding well. Although countries in the conflict have officially disengaged their forces, there are reports that indicate that they continue to operate through rebel and militia proxies. We should continue

to put pressure on those found to be undermining the disengagement process. We would also like to emphasize that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) needs to be given the means to carry out its duties as mandated under resolution 1291 (2000). Furthermore, the parties to the conflict must be made responsible for ensuring that the areas under their control are accessible and safe for MONUC to proceed with its work. The news that another United Nations helicopter was recently shot at is not encouraging.

The Council should also continue to follow the peace process closely and discourage any backsliding. All parties must be made to realize that they are under the close scrutiny of the international community. We note with concern the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and urge that immediate attention be given to alleviating the plight of civilian victims. The facts show that more than 2 million Congolese have died since the start of the current conflict in 1998 and that many more are in critical need of food and medical attention. We urge aid agencies to intensify their efforts to help those people and again call on the parties to the conflict to allow aid workers safe access in order to carry out their work.

Finally, we would like to assure the Secretary-General's new Special Representative to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, of our support as he takes on his functions this month.

Ms. Achouri (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): As all the speakers before me have done, I too wish to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for the excellent briefing he delivered. It was rich in information and full of good news on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His briefing focused in particular on recent important developments since our meeting on 24 July.

I am referring especially to the decision taken at the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue in Addis Ababa to begin the dialogue next October at Addis Ababa. That agreement seems to signal a decisive turning point in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to augur a positive outcome for the conflict in that country. All parties are therefore urged to take concrete measures to ensure that the dialogue reaches its ultimate goal, which is the achievement of lasting peace and true national reconciliation. The Security Council must support this endeavour and encourage the parties to embark on this dialogue in the same spirit that prevailed in Gaborone. That was in fact the recommendation made by the Secretary-General when he spoke to the press through his spokesperson, in response to this important development. The Security Council must also continue to follow this matter very closely.

Here, I welcome the initiative of the French delegation to organize next week, when France holds the presidency of the Security Council for September, a meeting with Sir Ketumile Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue. We hope that that meeting will provide an opportunity for the Council to identify specific ways and means of supporting and encouraging the dialogue and to make the dynamic of inter-Congolese peace and reconciliation irreversible.

I would like also to congratulate the Irish delegation on its initiative in convening the Political Committee when Ireland holds the presidency of the Council in October. We believe that these successive meetings will enable the international community and the Security Council to shoulder their respective responsibilities towards the Congolese people and towards the other peoples and countries of the Great Lakes region.

However, it must be recognized that the restoration of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo does not depend solely on the inter-Congolese dialogue, however crucial it is to achieving that objective. We welcome the progress reported today in the area of disengagement and redeployment.

We also congratulate Namibia and Uganda on the action they have taken to honour their commitments. But all parties must honour the entirety of the commitments they made in the Lusaka Agreement, the Kampala disengagement plan and the Harare sub-plans. They must also fully abide by the resolutions of the Security Council. Kisangani must be demilitarized in keeping with resolution 1304 (2000). In that regard, the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RDC-G) must meet the Council's demands without precondition or delay.

The disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) of armed groups remains the core issue and will determine progress in other areas. This is a fact that the

Secretary-General pointed out to the Council on 24 July. We are disappointed that little real action has been taken to date in this area. In that regard, my delegation wishes to state that it would have preferred that the initiative by the representatives of countries members of the Council with Presidents Kabila and Kagame on the DDRRR programme had been more conclusive. However, we hope that the Secretary-General's visit, which will include the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, will make it possible to re-establish direct contact between the leaders of those two countries, and that it will mark the beginning of true cooperation towards a political framework, something that is essential to implementing the DDRRR programme.

As the Secretary-General stated at our meeting on 24 July, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not yet irreversible. Major challenges remain for the United Nations and for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ngongi — whom we take this opportunity to wish every success. The challenges facing him and the United Nations — both the Secretariat and the Security Council — are daunting.

My delegation welcomes the current efforts by the Secretariat and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to pave the way for a transition to the third phase of the Mission's deployment, a very important phase during which MONUC will require all the resources necessary to carry out the very complex and often dangerous tasks that have been assigned to it. We eagerly await the report on this issue to be submitted in the near future by the Secretary-General. My delegation will support any useful recommendations that the Secretary-General might make in this regard.

The effective, full and speedy withdrawal of foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo also remains essential. The illegal exploitation of natural resources and the other wealth of the country must stop as soon as possible. Above all else, the Congolese parties must embark on a dialogue in the best possible frame of mind and without any external interference. As the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kamel Morjane, has stressed, the countries concerned must demonstrate firm political will and commitment to reconcile their security concerns and the need for regional stability with the basic need to restore the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That seems to us to be the only way to establish peaceful coexistence, cooperation and development for the peoples of the region, who have for so long been deprived of the peace and security to which they are entitled. We urge all parties concerned to face that fact.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Being this low on the list of speakers at an open briefing, I think it would be inhumane of me to subject the Council to a long prepared statement, particularly as the Permanent Representative of Belgium will be speaking later on behalf of the European Union. But I want to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his very useful briefing, which has come at a very appropriate time given the imminence of the Secretary-General's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the appointment of Mr. Ngongi, whom we wish extremely well.

I also think that there is general consensus about the tone of what we are looking at here, and that there is guarded optimism — but with real problems remaining in a few areas. I think there is also general consensus about what those areas are. I will not recite them again; other speakers have done so. But I just want to pick out a couple of points and ask a couple of questions.

First, like others, I think that the preparatory meeting for the national dialogue that took place in Gaborone has been a considerable success, and of considerable significance. I think congratulations are due to the Congolese political parties, to Congolese civil society and, of course, to the facilitator on a very successful first meeting. I think, as Mr. Annabi has said, the fact that agreement was reached on political prisoners is a very good sign. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all sides to move forward on that issue. If we could come to closure on that, it would be a very significant gesture of good will.

It is obviously good, too, that a date has been set for the first meeting in Addis Ababa. But it is clear — not least from what happened in Gaborone, which was a matter of considerable organizational complexity, just to get the initial phase on the road — that setting up things in Addis Ababa is going to require a considerable administrative effort. I think it would be very good if we could keep a close eye on this, and particularly if the Secretariat could keep a close eye on

it. I think that if the facilitator's office indicates — either when we see Sir Ketumile Masire or subsequently — that additional help is needed, it would be very good if that appeal were not lost on the Secretariat. I would be very interested to hear the comments of the Assistant Secretary-General on that point.

Like others, we too remain concerned about Kisangani. We do see the need for early progress and early action towards demilitarization by the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-G).

I would now like to talk briefly about disarmament, demobilization durable solutions, reintegration and repatriation, which I think is now known in the Mission area as D-three or D-cubed. That, at least, is easier to say. So I will say it. It is clearly important that the D-three programme move forward, and that it move forward as fast as possible and without necessarily waiting for the third phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

I entirely understand, agree with and take the point that the Assistant Secretary-General has made about the need for a political framework. But at the same time, I think that we should be sensitive to the fact that in some areas it may be inappropriate to expect the parties to do everything themselves.

We hope that the Secretariat and MONUC will be as proactive as they can and will make use of opportunities that may arise to assist the D-three process as they do arise, for example in Kamina.

I would be very interested to hear anything that Mr. Annabi may want to tell us today about progress in planning by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for D-three, because, clearly, we all need to be prepared to make the D-three effort a success. Without early movement on D-three — and I address myself here to the parties — there is a risk that the peace process may collapse.

We also need to resolve quickly the issue of the appointment of the United Nations humanitarian coordinator. It is vital that this role should be filled immediately if the United Nations is going to be able to provide speedy and targeted humanitarian assistance. I hope that that message will be taken away from this Council meeting today. That appointment needs to be made soon.

I was also concerned to hear what Mr. Annabi had to say about the restrictions on access to humanitarian workers in some areas. We naturally hope that those difficulties will be remedied immediately.

Finally, Ambassador Strømmen of Norway raised concerns about the treatment of children, and I would like to conclude my statement by saying that we strongly share those concerns. It is very important, particularly in the light of Carol Bellamy's visit, that all international norms with regard to children should be respected and implemented.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having convened this important meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at a very crucial stage of the peace process in that country. I wish also to express my delegation's appreciation to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his timely, useful and very comprehensive briefing.

As previous speakers rightly noted, the prospects for a successful outcome of the concerted efforts to achieve peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have never been as promising as they are today. Some positive steps have been taken by the parties to reinvigorate the political dialogue, to ensure the implementation of the ceasefire, to enhance the inter-Congolese dialogue and to advance the disengagement and redeployment of forces.

Unfortunately, we cannot state that the peace process has yet reached a point of no return and has become irreversible. The recalcitrance of certain parties and their attempts to preserve the status quo are clear indications of the existing difficulties threatening the peace process.

The precarious situation is still connected with many political, military and social problems, whose solution, in turn, is dependent on the willingness of the sides to implement their commitments under the Lusaka Peace Agreement. In that regard, it is extremely important for the parties concerned to realize that only a comprehensive solution to the problems, accompanied by their readiness for constructive dialogue and compromise, can bring about real results leading to a meaningful settlement of the conflict.

It is with that idea in mind that we welcome the outcome of the long-awaited preparatory meeting on the inter-Congolese dialogue held at Gaborone recently. We share the general assessment that the results of that meeting exceeded the expectations. In that respect, I want to pay tribute to Sir Ketumile Masire and his team for their hard work and efforts to convene the meeting and make it a success.

It is important that the representatives of the Congolese Government, rebels, unarmed opposition and civil society managed to reach a compromise agreement on a number of issues concerning the holding of the inter-Congolese dialogue — one of the key elements of the Lusaka Agreement. We find this very encouraging for the whole peace process. Also promising is the fact that various Congolese representatives have agreed to meet together in October in Addis Ababa and to discuss the outstanding issues. We encourage them to preserve the spirit of Gaborone during the time left before the actual beginning of the inter-Congolese dialogue and to refrain from any actions that could undermine the progress achieved thus far.

Moreover, progress in the inter-Congolese dialogue should be accompanied by progress in the implementation of other aspects of the Lusaka accord, namely the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of armed groups. Appropriate measures in that regard constitute fundamental criteria for a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region as a whole.

As for the issue of armed groups, whose attacks and violent actions have threatened the peace efforts, we think that there is an urgent need for a visionary strategy with a view, in particular, to establishing an effective ceasefire throughout the whole Congolese territory, and to remobilizing all parties in the implementation of their obligations in accordance with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

We continue to be deeply concerned over the delay in the demilitarization of Kisangani, which today remains among the major obstacles to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following Rwanda and Uganda, the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma) must now abide by that commitment without further delay. We call again on all those who have influence over the RCD-Goma to convey that demand and to finally achieve this decisive step in the peace process.

My delegation strongly believes that the Security Council should make a clear commitment, in line with its policy, to consider expanding the size of United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), so that the mission can carry out in full the tasks assigned to it as well as additional tasks. We are certain that there is a practical need for the Council to demonstrate a credible presence, determination and commitment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have seen in Sierra Leone the difference that a credible United Nations presence can make.

We again call upon all the parties to leave behind needless ambitions and to engage in the realization of the Lusaka accord. We believe that only the pursuit of dialogue and effective cooperation to strengthen the climate of trust among the parties will make it possible to overcome their reluctance and doubts concerning one another. It is therefore with satisfaction and hope that we look forward to the continuation of contacts and dialogue among the leaders of the region.

Finally, I would like to stress once again that, in order to be effective, any peace process must be accompanied by economic assistance. In that context, we welcome the launching of the economic dimension of MONUC, with the resumption of navigation on the Congo river. My delegation reiterates the appeal made to the donor community to establish local projects of rapid impact, so as to improve the daily lives of the Congolese.

Mr. Hume (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting, which we see as a prelude to an important set of Security Council deliberations on the crisis in the Great Lakes region. We are glad to see that your delegation has been working with those of the next two Presidents in order to ensure that these issues remain at the forefront of our work. I would also like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Annabi, for his briefing.

I would like to mention briefly that we have noted the changing of the guard in the Congo from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Morjane, who certainly carried the United Nations

flag high. We offer our very best wishes to the new Special Representative, Mr. Ngongi, and to those serving with him.

The implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement has been a roller coaster ride. On the positive side, we have seen deployed the first elements of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and the ceasefire and disengagement lines are holding. There has been progress on the withdrawal of some foreign forces, but the forces of the principal belligerents remain in place. The recent preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue was an important milestone — one that my delegation looks forward to discussing in the Council's open meeting with President Masire.

On the negative side, the humanitarian and human rights situation in the Congo has not improved; this is an area of great concern. The negative forces continue to receive arms, and we are witnessing a dangerous escalation of fighting in South Kivu. We heard this morning about the possibility of new violence in the Ituri district. We are deeply concerned about the offensive in South Kivu by members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe, as well as about the fact that those forces appear to be receiving support from elements in the Government. This fighting will impede, not encourage, the peace process, as surely must be evident to all.

Although the people of Kisangani have been spared the ravages of renewed fighting, their city has yet to be demilitarized. Finally, we have yet to see a credible plan; such a plan must be based on a regional political consensus for the disarming and demobilization of negative forces, in particular the ex-FAR and Interahamwe.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, will soon visit Kinshasa, Kigali and Kisangani and that he will take with him the new Special Representative. The Secretary-General's trip raises the critical question of whether we have arrived at the point of transition to phase III of MONUC's concept of operations. We look forward to his trip and to his report following the trip, which we hope will discuss some of the issues that I shall mention. The withdrawal of foreign forces and the disarmament and demobilization of negative forces are closely related concerns that test the political will of the parties. We look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's best judgement on how to move them forward.

The United States Government is eager to see MONUC play a role in the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of negative forces, but we will look to other international entities to plan and execute the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of any individuals not under indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. This will obviously require close coordination among MONUC, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and Governments in the region. We hope that United Nations planning will go hand-in-hand with that of the Joint Military Commission and Governments in the region.

The Secretary-General helped to sustain a process of bilateral dialogue between President Kagame and President Kabila. The Security Council mission to the region last spring identified this as a critical diplomatic channel that needed to be strengthened. When the two Presidents were here eight months ago, Ambassador Cunningham told them that the United States Government believed that they had a common interest in ensuring that the territory of the Congo was not used by negative forces to destabilize the region. Our message, which we have consistently repeated in public and in private, is that the long-term security interests of both countries would best be addressed through a policy of cooperation.

We hope that the Secretary-General will again stress the need for bilateral contacts between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda. Such contacts should include those at the level of head of State, but these should also be mirrored in contacts between the senior military and diplomatic leadership of both countries. We believe that the pursuit of common long-term security interests is critical to accomplishing the military tasks laid out in the Lusaka Agreement.

In response to three separate incidents of Rwandan and Ugandan fighting in Kisangani, the Security Council demanded, in resolution 1304 (2000), the demilitarization of the city. We hope that the Secretary-General will raise that issue while he is in Kisangani, and also when he is in Kigali and Kinshasa. While the Security Council resolution calls for the demilitarization of Kisangani, the Kampala disengagement plan gives the Rassemblement

congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma) the right to administer the town until new national structures can assume that function. As we have heard today, the demand in resolution 1304 (2000) for the demilitarization of Kisangani remains the unanimous position of the Security Council. We hope that the Secretary-General and his new Special Representative can launch the process of implementing that resolution, preferably in close cooperation with the RCD leadership.

Finally, we hope that the Secretary-General will be able to work with the Government of the Congo to name and dispatch a United Nations humanitarian coordinator. I think one of the striking things in the briefing today was that, despite progress in other areas, there really has been no meaningful progress in taking people out of the risky situation that they have been in for too long in the Congo. We think that getting the right kind of leadership on the ground, in cooperation with the Government of the Congo, will give hope to people, particularly in war-torn areas. We know that our partners in the international relief community feel acutely the lack of such leadership, and we hope that this situation will be resolved as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Colombia.

My delegation would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his extensive briefing on the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We were very encouraged by the positive signs to which he referred with regard to the observance of the ceasefire, the disengagement of forces and the gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Congolese territory. Above all, however, we welcome the positive results of the first preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, held from 20 to 24 August, on which the facilitator, former President Ketumile Masire, will report to the Council next week. In our contacts with his office during August, we have noted his readiness to meet with the Council on 5 September.

The agreement to hold a dialogue, starting on 15 October in Addis Ababa, with the full participation of the Congolese parties signatories to the Lusaka Agreement and representatives of the various forces in the country, is a positive development.

With regard to the briefing provided by Mr. Annabi, I would also like to emphasize the disturbing aspects of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Combat is still occurring in the eastern part of the country in operations promoted by rebel groups that have not signed the Lusaka Agreement. Difficulties persist in the demilitarization of Kisangani despite the efforts of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to maintain a dialogue with the representatives of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD).

However, the humanitarian situation is reason for our greater concern, and on this we agree with the various delegations who have spoken. We especially wish to underline the sense of the visit of Ms. Carol Bellamy of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo this month. We regret that she was not able to join us at this meeting due to her participation in the Conference against Racism being held in South Africa starting this week. Her visit contributed to highlighting the needs of minors in this conflict, particularly the access of humanitarian organizations to restricted areas where there are people living at serious risk, and the recruitment of child soldiers on both sides of the border. For this reason, we wish to congratulate UNICEF for this initiative.

Finally, I would like to underline the importance of the visit by the Secretary-General to the area beginning next week, accompanied by his new Special Representative and the head of MONUC, Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi. We hope that results of this visit help to maintain the positive direction events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are taking.

In conclusion, I want to add the voice of my delegation to the desire of the Congolese people, expressed by Congolese Foreign Minister, Leonard Okitundu, in Gaborone last week, when he stated that the war in the Congo had ended. This is the aspiration of my delegation and of all the members of the Security Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council. I now call on the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mukongo Ngay (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, at a time when your presidency of the Security Council is reaching its end, I have the pleasant duty to convey to you my heartfelt congratulations and say how very much my delegation admires the excellent quality of the work you have accomplished during the deliberations of the Security Council during the month of August.

I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of China, your predecessor, for having successfully guided the discussion of very complex items before the Council in July.

Since we are all eagerly awaiting the launching of phase III of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), I would like to take this opportunity in addressing the Council today to convey the encouragement of my delegation and of the entire Congolese people to those whose dedication to the cause of peace has allowed the opening of a real window of opportunity in the peace process in my country. This window of opportunity, unless it is closed, will enable us to see in the very near future the end of a war that has torn my country apart for more than three years.

This honour is due particularly to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has personally intervened in relations with donor and troop-contributing countries and with the African Union in their tireless efforts towards peace in my country.

The present moment is also an opportunity to pay well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Kamel Morjane, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His leadership at the head of MONUC was crowned with success after successfully dealing with several turbulent areas, especially during the deployment of military liaison officers in the rear of the various military headquarters and during the deployment of the military observers while carrying out phase II of MONUC.

On behalf of my Government, I welcome the arrival at the head of MONUC of its new leader, Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi. I am sure that upon taking over his duties, he will diligently work for the scrupulous application of the various resolutions and recommendations of the Security Council and for a massive, rapid and complete deployment of MONUC under phase III of the operation, thereby justifying the confidence the Secretary-General has placed in him and responding to the well-known expectations of the Congolese people.

I also wish to congratulate the facilitator Sir Ketumile Masire for the success of the Gaborone meeting.

As for the members of the Council, everyone is aware that the involvement of the Council and the international community in the peace efforts in my country has enabled several advances. However, it must also be recognized that the Council could have done better.

Allow me to remind you that the eyes of the international community are now upon you. You are called on to meet a great challenge, that of exercising the prerogatives of the United Nations Charter to restore the rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people, which have been abused by three years of barbaric and pointless aggression.

You are accordingly obliged to act in keeping with all your relevant resolutions, from resolution 1234 (1999) of 9 April 1999 through resolution 1335 (2001) of 15 June 2001. You also have recourse to the basic principles of the San Francisco Declaration of 26 June 1945, which are the very basis of the United Nations Charter and introduce the peoples of the entire world to the rule of international law by upholding the respect due to the dignity of human beings, the protection of freedoms, the affirmation of equality, independence and the sovereignty of States.

Today, more than every before, the need to demilitarize the city of Kisangani is a priority. My delegation notes with surprise that it is precisely now, when the Congolese people most greatly aspire to peace, that certain individuals have chosen to deliberately delay the peace process in my country. There is especially the persistent refusal of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma) to demilitarize the city of Kisangani, despite the many resolutions of the Council urging it to do so. It is the Council's responsibility to take note of this refusal and to impose on RCD-Goma the measures prescribed in previous resolutions.

As a prime witness of the martyrdom and the suffering of the Congolese people, and as a political and physical symbol of renewal and the restoration of

the dignity of an entire people, Kisangani must be completely demilitarized in order to eliminate the effects of the profound trauma suffered by the people since the serious clashes in the streets of the city between the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF).

Moreover, my delegation notes with regret that despite the commitment made at the eleventh session of the Political Committee, one of the parties has still not completed its redeployment and disengagement along the new defensive positions as defined by the Harare subplans, in violation of resolution 1341 (2001) and 1355 (2001) of the Council. This has prevented my Government from undertaking its responsibilities, particularly in the establishment of a civil administration in the areas to be evacuated adjacent to the disengagement line.

This deliberate stalling has held up the complete implementation of phase II of MONUC's deployment, while in accordance with the spirit of the Lusaka Agreement, the Congolese people is already well along the path of dialogue. My Government believes that now is the ideal time for the Security Council to fully assume its responsibilities and to translate into action its many resolutions on the situation in my country, particularly by ordering the quick launching of phase III of the deployment of MONUC, which must accompany the withdrawal of troops of aggression and other foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Throughout the whole of the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — from Goma to Matadi, from Gbadolite to Lubumbashi, from Ikela to Kikwit, from Mbuji-Mayi to Yangambi and from Kinshasa to Kisangani — the Congolese people cherish the unity, independence and national sovereignty of their country. They are weary of the effects of a futile and pointless war of aggression that was imposed on them by surprise. The preparatory meeting for the inter-Congolese dialogue, whose work ended last Friday, attests to the ardent desire of a people for peace and for progress towards national reconciliation and a culture of democratic values that will allow them to begin work on the daunting task of national reconstruction while all along respecting political diversity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As the Council is aware, the open-mindedness demonstrated by my country since the coming to power of the President of the Republic, Major-General Joseph Kabila, has been for all the Congolese people an indication of renewed confidence among all the parties. My Government's presence at the Gaborone meeting was proof, if any were needed, of our determination to seriously consider the question of the inter-Congolese dialogue.

As announced by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, at a press conference held in Kinshasa on Monday, 27 August 2001, generally speaking one can deduce from the pre-dialogue work done at Gaborone that there is a clear desire to return to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — beginning with the withdrawal of foreign troops. On can also deduce an emotional, patriotic appeal for unity, national concord and reconciliation among all of the sons and daughters of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — conditions that would ultimately lead to the holding of free, transparent and democratic elections.

The work done at Gaborone did indeed produce encouraging and significant results, including the setting of 15 October as the date for the commencement of dialogue at Addis Ababa. In addition, the rules of procedure for the national dialogue, the agenda, the declaration on the withdrawal of foreign troops and the Republican Pact were also concluded. It is now up to the Security Council to support this will and to take this opportunity to secure the immediate, unconditional, total and final withdrawal of Rwandan, Ugandan, Burundian and other occupying forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That should be done in conformity with the order to withdraw contained in resolution 1304 (2000), and should make it possible for the sons and daughters of the country to air wash dirty linen in private.

With regard to the security concerns put forth by the aggressor countries, my Government has opted to deprive those countries of all diversionary tactics aimed at prolonging the occupation of the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at justifying the continuation of the hostilities, which make possible the illicit plunder and exploitation of the natural resources and other riches of our country.

It is for that reason that, although it has been attacked in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, my country

reiterates its willingness peacefully and conclusively to resolve the conflict stemming from the three aggressor countries. My country has no hidden agenda vis-à-vis the aggressor countries. I can assure the Council that my Government will not allow its national territory to serve as a base for launching operations to destabilize neighbouring countries with which it lives amicably. I would therefore like to announce to the Council today that in a few days my country, which takes seriously the security demands of Rwanda, will be calling in the ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to announce to them the necessary cantonment measures we have undertaken in the framework of the plans for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation (DDRRR). We will in due course invite the United Nations and the Security Council to certify this and to help us implement the DDRRR measures proposed under the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

With regard to human rights, the points made by Special Rapporteur Roberto Garretón after his recent visit to the country are still relevant. That is particularly the case with regard to his conclusion that progress has been made by the Government in the area of human rights. Nevertheless, he was not wrong in deploring the situation in the territories under occupation, where killings are still taking place — killings he ascribes to the Congolese rebels and their Rwandan and Ugandan allies.

At a time when many people were focussing on Gaborone, where the preparatory work for the inter-Congolese dialogue took place, the machine to exterminate the Congolese people, guided by the aggressor countries, has not stopped functioning. Massacres, kidnappings and deportations of Congolese people have continued apace. According to a press release from the non-governmental organization *SOS droits de l'homme en catastrophe*, which operates in South Kivu, a total of nine people were summarily executed between 2 and 3 August 2001 by elements of the Rwandan Patriotic Army in the city of Uvira. Between January and July of this year 108 people were killed in that city by Rwandan troops. Most of them were young people between the ages of 20 and 30 years of age, but children as young as three were also killed. A total of 85 young Congolese persons were recently arrested by elements of the Rwandan Army. That figure includes the disappearances of 47 persons from Buriba and 38 from Kiliba, in North Kivu. According to the Missionary Service News Agency (MISNA), they were deported to Rwanda. Given these repeated offences by the aggressor countries, immediate withdrawal from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an indispensable condition for the restoration of peace and the improvement the human rights situation in that part of the country.

With regard to humanitarian matters, all the reports made by humanitarian agencies about the Congo agree that the current conflict has caused what the Prime Minister of Belgium refers to as one of the worst humanitarian disasters the world has ever seen. Three years of war have pushed my country down to the one-hundred and fifty-second place out of the 174 countries surveyed in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. That means we have dropped 12 places.

The consequences of that situation are well known. Over 2.5 million people have died. Over 2 million people have become internally displaced, most of them being children separated from their families. Over 16 million people are in desperate need of food aid, while 18.5 million people lack access to medical services. Given this situation, my Government calls upon the Security Council to take into account the very relevant recommendations made recently by the non-governmental groups Oxfam, Save the Children and Christian Aid.

My Government, which has always given its full cooperation to opening up humanitarian corridors, also calls upon the Council to step up pressure on those who continue to impede the work of humanitarian organizations, so as to improve the access of humanitarian workers to heretofore largely inaccessible regions and to allow for the distribution of assistance and the counting of displaced people within each province. It will also be necessary to open up humanitarian corridors to restore commercial links between Kinshasa and the eastern and northern provinces, in accordance with the plan of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

With regard to the economic aspects of the situation, my Government welcomes the initiative taken by the Security Council to call for the Bretton Woods institutions to carry out 40 quick-impact projects in areas where contingents of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo (MONUC) have been deployed. This is a matter of urgency. Ultimately, however, the Council will have to discuss how to include appropriate post-conflict management of the current crisis in plans for the return of lasting peace.

In the light of the progress made in the political inter-Congolese negotiations — all our hopes now being pinned on 15 October — and with a view to implementing the promising plans worked out by the Political Committee for the total withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government believes that launching phase III of MONUC's deployment should not be further delayed. This was the thrust of the joint appeal made recently in Windhoek by President Joseph Kabila, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and President Sam Nujoma, of Namibia, calling on MONUC to speed up its deployment.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the commitment of my Government to comply with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as well as with all relevant resolutions of the Security Council on the situation in my country. Therefore, I call upon the Council to take note of the determination that was clearly expressed at the end of the Gaborone meeting by the representatives of all parties to the inter-Congolese political negotiations, who spoke of the urgent need for foreign forces to withdraw from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They unanimously launched an urgent appeal to the United Nations to speed up the withdrawal process in order to enable the Congolese to work to rebuild their country.

My country has made good-neighbourliness one of the guiding principles of its foreign policy, and we intend to live in peace with our neighbours. As our head of State, His Excellency Major-General Joseph Kabila, said at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva, it is still possible for us to build a better world for the traumatized peoples of the Great Lakes region. Our meagre resources should be used for the development of our countries and for the well-being of our peoples, not for waging war.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belgium. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Annabi, for his excellent briefing.

If, as he has underscored, the ceasefire has held for several months in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, developments on the ground have in part been disappointing since the Council's July debate. There is, however, a glimmer of hope to be seen in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement: the success of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, recently held in Gaborone. That success has been highlighted by most of the speakers.

The European Union would like once again to emphasize the importance of the inter-Congolese dialogue, which is a key element for the re-establishment of the rule of law, democracy and national sovereignty in the Congo. That the meeting was attended by President Joseph Kabila, political movements and representatives of civil society shows the Congolese people's resolve to take charge of their own future and to work together for the establishment of a new political order. The success of the meeting also crowns the preparatory efforts of the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and his team. We hope that the spirit of Gaborone will give impetus to the peace process.

Admittedly, Gaborone is only a first step. It is important that it now be followed up in practice and that the dialogue proper, which will start on 15 October in Addis Ababa, go hand in hand with and stimulate other aspects of the Lusaka Agreement. The parties have displayed a constructive spirit. They need to maintain it and to show political courage and creativity if this historic opportunity for national reconciliation is to be seized and fully utilized. As the representative of the United Kingdom pointed out, the international community, and the United Nations in particular, must

stand by the Congolese people throughout the process. The European Union and its member States have already contributed to facilitation work and are prepared to continue their support.

We cannot congratulate ourselves on similar progress on the question of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR). While the exercise is indeed complex, it remains one of the pillars for resolving the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union, as the representative of France pointed out, is convinced that a solution to this delicate problem would be within reach if a sincere and courageous bilateral dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda were developed. Despite discreet contacts between President Kabila and President Kagame, we have the impression that a climate of mistrust continues to prevail between the two countries. We therefore invite the Secretary-General — as other speakers have done, notably the representative of the United States — to call upon President Kabila and President Kagame during his trip to step up dialogue and seek mutually acceptable solutions. In the meantime, it is of the utmost importance that negative forces not receive any material or logistic support.

It is equally important for the overall settlement of the Congolese issue that President Kabila and President Buyoya discuss the presence of Burundian rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The European Union emphasizes that the international community's action on DDRRR needs to be coordinated, and it is up to the United Nations to take the lead. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is already authorized to assist with DDRRR within the limits of its resources. According to how the situation evolves, the configuration, mandate and strength of the mission will have to be adapted so that it can provide decisive support in the implementation of a precise and detailed plan for that purpose.

For the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, innovative arrangements and formats have been established for consultation and cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the countries of the region. The meeting between the Security Council and the Lusaka Political Committee in February 2001 proved productive. We understand that a similar meeting is planned in the near future. The European Union welcomes this and hopes that cooperation in New York will be matched on the ground by creative initiatives such as the co-location of the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and MONUC headquarters in Kinshasa.

The European Union reaffirms once again that only a political solution can bring peace to the Congo and lay the foundation for the reconstruction and economic recovery of the region. Abandoning the military option will make possible an increase in aid and international cooperation. The European Union has declared its readiness to mobilize sizeable resources. Such assistance, which could amount to as much as 120 million euros, will be made available in the light of tangible progress in the peace process and in the inter-Congolese dialogue.

As we stated here together a month ago following Ambassador Morjane's briefing, the peace process has not become irreversible. The intervening month has proved particularly disappointing in this regard. Suffice it to mention the situation in Kisangani, which has still not been demilitarized, in spite of the Council's resolutions, or the incomplete state of disengagement, or certain problems encountered by MONUC, such as the unacceptable attack on a MONUC helicopter in eastern Congo. We again call on the parties to honour in full the commitments voluntarily entered into by them in signing the Lusaka Agreement and the other agreements that followed.

The international community — and the Security Council in particular — must continue to keep a close watch on developments on the ground, seize upon any openings as they arise and step in when the situation threatens to get out of hand. The Secretary-General's visit is a significant sign of his personal involvement and of the attention which the Organization continues to pay to the conflict in the Great Lakes region. The European Union wishes the Secretary-General every success in that important mission. We also wish every success to Mr. Ngongi, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who in the next few days will be taking over the tasks of Ambassador Morjane, whom I would like once more to congratulate and thank.

For its part, following bilateral visits in August 2001 by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, and the United Kingdom Secretary of

State for International Development, Clare Short, the Union will be sending to the region, in September 2001, its current President, the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Louis Michel, and the European Union High Representative, Javier Solana. That visit will reaffirm the European Union's strong commitment to the peace process and its solidarity with the region's long-suffering people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this important meeting. I wish also to thank Mr. Annabi for the comprehensive briefing that he gave this morning. It was clear from the briefing that good progress has been made on a number of fronts in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, although there remain some issues of concern. Those concerns include the security situation in the East of the country and the dire humanitarian situation. We are particularly concerned about the suffering of innocent women and children.

In that connection, my delegation welcomes the aid provided and the pledges made by the international community aimed at alleviating the humanitarian situation and helping the economic recovery of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend the United Nations Children's Fund for the important work that it is doing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call on the international community to continue, and to expand, its assistance, given the seriousness of the situation and the large-scale destruction that took place during the war.

It is important for all the parties to fulfil their commitments and obligations in accordance with the terms of the Lusaka Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions. In that regard, the continued occupation of Kisangani by the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie is deplorable; the Security Council should do everything in its power to ensure that the city of Kisangani is demilitarized, as called for in resolution 1304 (2000).

As indicated by Mr. Annabi this morning, the withdrawal of Namibian troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo is on schedule and is proceeding well.

My delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, which took place in Gaborone, Botswana. My delegation is happy to note that the parties were able to agree on a venue and date for the dialogue. We trust that women and groups representing them will actively participate in the forthcoming meetings. In that regard, we commend the facilitator of the dialogue, Sir Ketumile Masire, for his untiring efforts to make the dialogue a success.

My delegation welcomes and fully supports the forthcoming visit of the Secretary-General to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region in general. We trust that this visit will provide a further impetus to the peace process. We also welcome and support his new Special Representative, Mr. Ngongi, and wish him all the best in his work. We pledge our full support to him.

My delegation furthermore hopes that the Security Council will soon approve the phase III deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that, when considering the mandate and size of phase III, it will take full account of the enormity of the conflict and the vastness of the country. We believe that the Council must act swiftly to support the positive developments in the peace process.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes once again to pay special tribute to the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Morjane, for the commendable work that he has done for the Democratic Republic of the Congo peace process.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): Rwanda would like to congratulate you, our colleague and friend, Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso, the representative of that friendly country Colombia, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August. We welcome the outstanding quality of the work of this body, the result of your great intellectual and diplomatic skills.

We greatly appreciate the briefing that Mr. Annabi, the Assistant Secretary-General for

Peacekeeping Operations, provided. I believe that his analyses, suggestions and proposals aimed at strengthening the ceasefire in the region and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at creating a climate of mutual trust and confidence deserve close attention.

Rwanda welcomes the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to achieve peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region. In this context, it will be an honour for us to welcome the Secretary-General and Mrs. Nane Annan, as well as the members of the important delegation that will be accompanying him, to Kigali on 3 and 4 September. We are steadfastly determined to support the endeavours of the Secretary-General, and we hope that all the efforts that he will undertake to resolve the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will meet with success. We will contribute to the best of our ability.

Rwanda also welcomes the success of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue, held in Gaborone, Botswana. We congratulate Sir Ketumile Masire, former head of State of Botswana, for his tireless and wise efforts, which, as the Council knows, have been severely tested time and time again — though wisdom has prevailed. If today we are pleased with the success of this pre-inter-Congolese dialogue in Gaborone, I believe it is the fruit of that wisdom which we recognize today, which President Masire has displayed. We thank him for it, and we are all at his side. The benefits of the success of the pre-inter-Congolese dialogue belong, first of all, to the Congolese themselves, of all political leanings — the Government, rebels, the unarmed opposition, civil society, the people as a whole, without any political or ethnic exclusion.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, that great country with some 50 million people, has considerable human potential. There are intellectuals of a high level; there are very talented political men. Unfortunately, after 32 years of Mobutu's dictatorship, these people were silenced, paralysed, frozen. Now the sun has risen, and the human warmth that has always been a strong point of the Congolese people is again evident. They are working hand in hand to set their country on the right course, thanks to this inter-Congolese dialogue.

The nine neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are certainly the second beneficiary of this inter-Congolese dialogue. As a result of this inter-Congolese dialogue the Democratic Republic of the Congo will, we hope, have representative political leadership able to manage and administer this large country and to set up mechanisms for exercising political power and to keep the entire Congolese territory under control.

In this way the Congolese and neighbouring countries will be reassured that there will be governmental interlocutors who can rise to the task of administering the Congolese territory. In this way the Congolese territory will no longer be used as a rear base for attacks by negative forces, including the planners and implementers of the Rwandan genocide who carried out their infamous acts in the countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including Rwanda. This is how, at least in part, the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be assured.

The other beneficiaries of the upcoming inter-Congolese dialogue will be the international community, which will heave a sigh of relief to see, finally, a positive outcome to the Congolese crisis, so that international solidarity can prevail to promote economic and social development in the Great Lakes region and Africa as a whole.

Perhaps, Mr. President, you will tell me that this is all well and good. That is quite true; it is very good, but we must never lose sight for one moment of the fact that we Rwandans have had our inter-Rwandese dialogue, which lasted some two years in Arusha. That dialogue led to an outstanding text, an unequalled document which Rwanda sorely needed, but the fateful moment came when one of the political leaders of Rwanda, the late President Habyarimana, a signatory to this text, as soon as he had signed it simply called it, publicly, a piece of paper. He was in a province in the north of Rwanda, where he was holding a public meeting. He stated there that he and his followers, the Interahamwe militia and the former members of the Rwandan armed forces, would come down like lightning and strike anyone in their path, reducing them to dust. Everything disappeared in a flash — the text, everything. And in this view of the whole world.

We hope that unfortunate event — which was due to poor political leadership in Rwanda at the time, after

our dialogue — which we experienced will never, ever happen to our neighbours and brothers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We wish them every success in this inter-Congolese dialogue, and we hope that the agreements they sign at the African Union, in Addis Ababa, will all be implemented in full sincerity and openness for the good of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the Congolese people as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Rwanda for the kind words addressed to the presidency.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Annabi to respond to the comments he has heard here.

Mr. Annabi: I will of course convey the good wishes of the members of the Council to the Secretary-General as he sets out on his trip to Kinshasa and Kigali on 1 September. I will also convey your good wishes to Mr. Ngongi, the incoming Special Representative. And of course, I will gladly pass on to Mr. Morjane the words of appreciation expressed here by Council members and others for the excellent work done during his tenure.

The first question, I think, was from Ambassador Ward and related to the participation of Congolese women in the inter-Congolese dialogue. As Council members are aware, this is an issue that President Masire feels very strongly about. I must confess that, on the basis of the reports we have received from Gaborone, the participation of women in the Gaborone meeting was not very good. We hope President Masire's appeals, and the appeals of this Council, will be heard and that Congolese women will be more adequately represented at the meeting in Addis Ababa. We certainly hope that will be the case.

The next question related to the assistance that the Secretariat might be able to provide to President Masire in the organization of the dialogue scheduled for next month in Addis Ababa. As Council members are aware, MONUC and the Secretariat are providing support to President Masire, in terms of both posts and logistic support. In fact, a good number — if not a large number — of the participants in the Gaborone meeting were flown there on MONUC airplanes. We have scheduled a meeting with President Masire on 5 September to see what more we can do to assist and support his efforts, of course within the constraints imposed on us by the United Nations rules and regulations and MONUC's budget. We will continue, especially in terms of logistics support, to do what we can to support his efforts, which are obviously essential to the settlement of this problem.

There was a question by Ambassador Eldon regarding the planning for the "three Ds", as he called them. Indeed, our colleagues in MONUC have arbitrarily decided to use a different acronym and to move from "DDRRR" to the three Ds, which stand for "disarmament, demobilization and durable solutions", which is perhaps simpler. I want to assure Ambassador Eldon that, as it is in fact authorized to do under resolution 1355 (2001), MONUC will take advantage of opportunities for DDR as they arise. In fact, we are working on a two-pronged strategy.

First, in the short-term, we are doing what we can to build capacity to enable MONUC to respond effectively to requests for early disarmament by groups that the Government has reportedly already assembled in two camps in Katanga and Bas-Congo, respectively. But, so far, MONUC has not had access to those camps. We are nevertheless prepared to assist in that regard.

The second aspect of this strategy looks at the longer term. This strategy will be based on an increased presence in the east, starting with the Kindu-Goma-Kalemie triangle and spreading beyond that to other areas in North and South Kivu. This strategy will include the implementation of confidence-building measures, which we feel will be essential before the gradual implementation of a DDR programme. As we speak, an integrated planning team has just spent the last 10 days in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to gather the information we need for further planning. As the Council knows, that information has so far not been forthcoming from the parties, despite the commitments made in that regard. That team has also been trying to advance the planning process. They will be returning to New York in the coming days.

I must repeat that, in the final analysis, the armed groups that need to disarm and demobilize will also need to know how they will be dealt with and what opportunities will be offered to them to reintegrate usefully into civilian life. That is why we need what I call a political framework, or a basic political understanding between the leaders concerned, with a coordination mechanism so that we can elaborate a programme in which these people can feel confident

that they can participate. There will of course always be hardcore elements that are more relevant for an international tribunal than for DDR and that may not participate. But for the others I think we need to define a programme on the basis of a political framework that offers genuine opportunities and assurances to those who will be reintegrated, repatriated or resettled, as the case may be.

I think this covers most of the questions that were raised.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Annabi for his presence and participation.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.